An essay
on
The influence of the mind on the body

Respectfully submitted
to the Faculty of the
Homœopathic Medical College
Of
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by
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Amid all the wars and discussions which have convulsed the medical world up to the present time, little attention comparatively has been allotted to the influence of the mind over the body, either as a hygenic agent or a predisposing cause of disease.

It is a subject well worthy the consideration of all, both the vitalist of the old school and the dynamist of the new.

It is an agent which will not admit of the bitter contentions in relation to triturations, attenuations, potencies, dilutions &c, which even now are mutilating the beautiful face of our yet infant science, but one in which champions from both ranks, both "high & low", can join hands, and with congeniality of feeling march onward in the glorious highway of truthful investigation.

At Creation, the mind, the image of God, the treasure of great price, the talent, was placed in a casket of skillful, delicate, divine workmanship

and called Man, the king, to reign over animate nature.

The jewell is so intimately connected with its receptacle that they are indivisible without destroying their identity.

In using the talent lent us, if we cherish it not carefully, if it gather moisture and rust, or become tarnished by neglect, the casket becomes worn, weak, corroded, spoiled, the treasure falls through and is lost.

There is an innate feeling instilled into us by the Alwise Creator, a kind of electric sympathy, which has its influences or its controlling power over us, and produces its effects in a greater or less degree in accordance with our individual susceptibilities.

The brain is an organ of the mind, a medium through which impressions are made and effects produced.

The tubular portion of the brain or nerve tissue is extended and distributed in most intimate connexion with all the different tissues of the body, thus establishing free communication throughout the whole organism.

All medical men know that a variety of serious maladies are produced by mental emotions, that the secretory organs of the human economy are affected in a remarkable degree. Viz—That a copious flow of saliva is induced by the sight of food when hungry, and its complete absence while laboring under excitement, such as fear or anxiety; The flood of tears from grief or joy; The increased secretion of bile during a fit of anger; The numerous derangements of the lactial apparatus in the mother, producing often a fatal effect upon the child; The emission of semen while the mind is rioting in lustful thought, and the nocturnal discharge, when the sensorium is

stimulated by lacivious dreams.

There are many instances upon record, and indeed occurring in every day life, illustrative of the powerful influence which the minds of pregnant women exert over their offspring.

It is said that during "the reign of terror" in France, more children were born "non compos mentis" than at any other period of her existence.

Some people are continually imagining themselves sick, and many patients come into every physicians charge, who are in reality physically vigorous and healthy, yet they have been told by Mr or Mrs "so & so" that they are "looking poorly" "failing fast" "very sick, must have a Doctor &c &c" until they actually believe that the cold grave is already yawning to receive their drooping bodies into its cheerless embrace. They will disconsolately ponder over "the last of earth" and fancy they hear the hard sods already

rattling and thumping down upon the echoing lids of their final sunken home.

Why! Such a man will despairingly weep over the fatigue caused by mounting a flight of stairs to see the Doctor, as a harbinger of his approaching doom — Poor fellow! Ask for a history of his case, and "Oh dear" he cant exactly tell what is the matter, but every says he is going to die.

Is there any relief for him?

Examine him carefully, tell him that with extreme caution he may hope to live a month, that he had better arrange his little affairs, its a path we all have to travel &c&c (Consolations which some Physicians know so well how to administer) & "ten to one" he wearily drags himself home & goes off like a shot in the deep sea —

On the other hand tell him the truth, that he is not diseased. make him believe it, Cheer him by dispelling those gloomy thoughts, Divert his mind. travel with him over the varied

scenes of earth. Inspire him with confidence in yourself, for the patient must have confidence in his physician or he is leaning on a bruised reed, every moment likely to fall and pierce. Do anything, everything to lead him from the one absorbing thought that he is a doomed man, and "with joy he will recover without physic"

It is a matter of the greatest importance for a practitioner when called to a patient, to firmly establish a confiding faith, almost strong enough as it were to "move mountains"

It is the secret why some men have so much better success in their treatment than others who are eminently their superiors in education.

It explains why some men who show a profound knowledge of our profession, who are unequalled in general diagnosis, pathology & therapeutics, are so notoriously unsuccessful in practice

The doctor must be confident too, (externally

at least) or he can never inspire the patient with the belief that he is in competent hands.

The bold and reckless pretender is well aware of these facts and while the purely scientific physician in other respects, who through false prejudice scorns at acknowledging the superior efficacy of this agent, meets not with the expected success, while he is anxiously deliberating, in steps the Quack and with his bright and pleasing promises, his worthless boastings, his tales of wonderful cures which are vouched for by long certificates, he ingratiates himself into full favor and commences his career perhaps by fatal drugging or it may be with some simple, harmless mixture with a name of astonishing magnitude, which sometimes produces relief.

Perkins metalic tractors were once considered an infallible remedy for many diseases, and upon experiment with wooden ones made to precisely resemble those of metal, it was

found that they produced the same results. The fact was made public and henceforth their peculiar efficacy was forever lost to the world.

Most Homoeopathic physicians have doubtless observed the decided "beneficial effect" produced by the administration of simple doses of Saccharum Lactis.

We have frequently for the purpose of experiment given sugar with the assurance that relief would without doubt soon follow, and often with a happy effect for the impression made was sufficient to remove the complaint, without impregnating the system with drugs.

From the dark and foolish manipulations of the heathen astrologer of ancient times, from the false mummery of crafty monks and priest of the middle ages, to the secret nostrums, cancer & corn plasters of the present day, the cause & of the effect has been the same.

"It should never be forgotten that courage, hope, confidence and a cheerful state of mind are powerful tonics and often enable the healthy system to resist the influence of contagious, epidemic and other noxious impressions, and the sick organism to combat successfully the destructive effect of disease. While fear, apprehension, grief, despair of recovery, sadness and depression of spirits, by impairing the resisting powers of the economy, become both predisposing and exciting causes of disease." (See Marcy's Theory & Practice)

A merchant in prosperous business suddenly learns that failure is unavoidable, crushed, his brain rankling with the humiliating thought of bankruptcy, he loses his appetite "grows dyspeptic" and then follows that vast train of unhappy symptoms which we too often find accompaning this horrid disease, he becomes morose, sullen, hypochondriac. Mania presents itself and in an unguarded moment the wretch puts an end to his existence.

Would medicinal treatment alone, have saved such a patient? No—

He requires the close observance of a discriminating mind, capable of also meting out the mental treatment in all its peculiar modifications.

Engage his mind in other business, or go his security, reestablish him in trade & the man will recover, or at least his system will be in a more susceptible condition for the operation of proper remedies, the judicious administration of which will soon restore him to his former self.

A case has been related by some author of a young lady (enjoying perfect health) who became ardently attached to a young man. The lady's parents resolutely opposed the connexion, and from that time her health began to fail. Her catemenia became irregular & for several months she had symptoms of Hysteria.

After a lapse of time she accidentally

saw a letter from her lover, in the hands of her parents, which they refused to shew her.

She became very much agitated and was seized with a violent paroxysm of hysteria, much more violent than any that had preceded,

Bleeding, purging and all the ordinary remedies (of the old school) were employed, but it was eight or ten days before she recovered from the attack, remembering but vaguely the sufferings she had experienced.

Her parents still continued obstinate in preventing the prosecution of the courtship, she grew worse again, at length she was taken on a tour and gradually recovered her serenity of mind and health of body.

It is plain that her chagrin, arising from the obstinate opposition, produced derangement of the functions of the Uterus, gradually hysteria was developed and a violent paroxysm occurred, leaving the mind somewhat impaired, but by change of country, travel, scenes of absorbing interest in a

land foreign to the one where the fond associations of her lover was ever present, at last succeeded in restoring the rosy blush of health to her pallid cheek.

The preceding incident (if I mistake not) occurred in France, where the God of Love is proverbialy more fickle in distributing among his votaries these little "affairs de coeur" than in our own land — When such affairs occur here, experience has taught that the safest way to succeed in restoring the victims health, is to bring about a reconciliation with the "old people" and let the little tyrant Cupid rule unmolested.

In Hypochondriasis although not usualy of a mental origin, yet we find such a complication of mental symptoms that medicines seem to be productive of but little good untill certain ideas which they have conceived, are eradicated.

&c

A case of this description has been related of which Dr C G Hempel had charge— A lady imagined that there were live frogs in her stomach. She had been under the treatment of several eminent practitioners for a long time, but with no success.

Dr Hempel was called and immediately comprehending the case, privately sent for a few frogs. Upon their arrival he administered some emetic, and while his patient was laboring under its operation, he thrust his fingers down her throat and (having a frog concealed in his coat sleave) with considerable difficulty extracted two of the reptiles & threw them sprawling & kicking upon a plate.

The patient upon seeing them was convinced that the cause had been removed and upon a short period of attendance was entirely restored to health.

Instances frequently occur where individuals have imagined that some part of their bodies were horribly deformed & the idea could not be eradicated without resorting to deception, which it is frequently absolutely necessary to do for the good of our patients.

Cases similar to the above could be cited "ad infinitum" were it necessary.

We cannot with ~~impunity~~ impunity overtax ourselves mentally, any more than physically.

The human economy is a perfect machine in which without foreign or obnoxious interference perfect harmony results in all its operations.

It is a saddening reality that as the world has steadily advanced in civilization, so have mental diseases increased in both frequency & intensity. Among the ancients mental alienation was comparatively unknown. Among the native Indians such diseases scarcely if

if ever occur. In our own United States where we enjoy a general freedom of thought, speech & action, unequalled by any other nation, will be found more of that class of patients than any where else upon the globe, Great Britain next, then France, Germany, Spain, Russia & so on down the scale.

Untill the days of Pinel physicians through ignorance, pronounced mania incurable, and neglected almost entirely those who were laboring under mental alienation.

They were said to be possessed of devils, and the extent of lenity and sympathy awarded them was a straitjacket, or chains and a dungeon.

Shakespeare beautifully alludes to this subject in his play of Macbeth. The Doctor while watching Lady Macbeth and hearing her delirious developments says "This disease

is beyond my practice — more needs she the Divine than the Physician" — again —
"Macbeth. How does your patient Doctor?
Doctor. Not so sick my lord as she is troubled with thick coming fancies which keep her from her rest. Macbeth. Cure her of that: canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow; Raze out the written troubles of the brain: and with some sweet oblivious antidote, Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient must minister to himself."

Lunatics in all grades appear to be easily impressed with a feeling of inferiority or dependency upon others, and with proper management, conduct themselves with as much, if not more propriety than many who

claim to be sane.

In Mania both spiritual & medicinal treatment have to be combined.

Besides the appropriate remedies, the raving madman must be met by a look and dicipline which is both bold and resolute, yet kind. The sad and broken hearted, with a tender sympathy. The hypochondriac with harmless deceit. The senseless gibberish of some should be passed by with but little notice, while others should be unheeded.

We as deciples of Hahnemann are enabled to treat patients according to the great Law of "similia similibus" and consequently meet with a success which was never before known in the Annals of Medicine.

At this point we will take the liberty of digressing a few lines from our subject, to enumerate some of the remedies to be employed

in alienation

Hahnemann tells us in his Organon page 176 that chronic diseases of the mind should be treated with Anti-psorics, while the acute forms should be treated with other remedies untill brought back to apparent health, and then should be treated for a long time with Anti psorics to eradicate the latent psoric miasm —

In all cases a rigid diet must be observed. The remedies which have been employed with success are Acon. Bell. Calc-c. Hyos. Lach. N-vom Op. Plat. Puls. Sil. Stram. Sulph & Veratr.

If caused by depressing emotions such as vexation, mortification, anger &c the principal remedies are Bell. Hyos. Ign. Phos-ac. Plat. N-vom & Sulph.

If it arise from excessive study the best medicines are Bell. Hyos. Lach. N-vom. Op. Plat. Stram. Sulph & Veratr —

The result of religious excitement require chiefly Lach Sulph

+ Verat. For derangement of mind in drunkards — Nux. Op. Bell. Calc-c. Hyos Lach. Merc. Puls. Sulph.

The following symptoms are indicative of the respective remedies.

Acon. Fear + presentiment of approaching death. gloominess, laconic style of speaking. congestion of blood in chest or head

Bell. Frightful visions. impulse to run away. disposition to bite, strike, + spit at. haggard eyes with fixed + furious look. burning thirst with repugnance to drink. dysphagia.

Calc-c. The mind dwells upon murder + incendiarism. trembling of limbs. dreams of rats + mice. aversion to conversation.

Hyos. Paroxysms alternating with epileptic fits. great fear + anguish at night. dread of being poisoned. jealousy and fury —

Lach. Excessive loquacity. rapid change of ideas. state of ecstacy + excitement. jealousy or pride.

Nux. Inquietude. desire to leave the house + wander around, fullness in abdomen. Constipation. trembling of limbs.

Opium. Lethargic drowsiness. dreams of reptiles. inability to sleep although there exists sleepiness, Constipation.

Plat. Raving of past event, with singing, laughing, weeping, dancing, grimaces &c. self esteem with contempt for others, dread of death.

Stram. Dizziness with loss of consciousness, frightful visions talks with spirits, desire for light & society with symptoms aggravated by solitude & darkness. Face pale & bloated.

Verat. Discouragement & despair, insanity, loss of consciousness, with singing & whistling, lascivious ideas, haughty & erroneous notions.

Sulph. Thinks he sees men fine things, confusion of intellect, mistakes things ——

That spiritual treatment is our "sheet anchor" in diseases of the mind which are produced by violent emotions, no one who has investigated the subject can deny, yet it is not only judicious but often absolutely necessary to employ medicines, particularly when the affection has been suffered to proceed for a long time without benefit.

For effects produced by fright or fear give, Bell. Hyos. Ign. Lach. Op. Puls. Samb & Verat.

Effects of sudden joy require Coff when the

nervous system is violently affected.

In selecting a remedy we should be guided by the existing condition of the mind & temperament of the patient.

For instance Acon would not be indicated in a mild, calm disposition, even temperament and slender constitution, but in a person of a robust constitution, sanguine temperament and in an irritable, complaining, "nervous" mood.

It would be unnecessary to detail more cases to substantiate the truth of my position and to conclude, if the mind, that medium through which the world "doth hold intercourse" that inexplicable quintessent part of man, that priceless boon which renders him "but little lower than the angels" in heaven and elevates him above created universe, if the mind is of such plastic mould, how carefully

should it be guarded, cherished and nurtured.

It should be the Physicians first charge and if he be wise and skillful the rest shall follow.